DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 154 289 CG 012 477

AUTHOR Hornung, Carlton A.; McCullough, B. Claire
TITLE Status Inconsistency in Marriage: Consequences for Life and Marital Dissatisfaction.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (72nd, Chicago, Illinois, September 5-9, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Achievement Need; *Educational Background; Educational Status Comparison; *Family Problems; Marital Instability; *Marriage Counseling; Mate Selection; Research Projects; Social Science Research; *Socioeconomic Status; Stress Variables
IDENTIFIERS *Status Inconsistency; *Two Career Families

ABSTRACT

The research reported here examines the consequences of inconsistency between the individual's statuses, his or her spouse's statuses, as well as inconsistencies between husbands' and wives' education and occupation status. Measures of generalized life dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with marriage are the outcome variables. The data were collected as part of the 1973 and 1974 General Social Surveys conducted by the N.O.R.C. The analysis was performed separately for men and women while controlling for achievement orientation. The results show status inconsistency to be the most important variable for explaining life and marital dissatisfaction. Further, the consequences of status inconsistency differ for men and women and are conditional on the individual's achievement orientation. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED154289

STATUS INCONSISTENCY IN MARRIAGE: CONSEQUENCES FOR LIFE AND MARITAL DISSATISFACTION*

Carlton A. Hornung

and

B. Claire McCullough
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

*We would like to thank Morris Rosenberg, Edward Dager, Mady Segal, Kenneth Kammeyer and Howard F. Taylor for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Of course they are not responsible for whatever shortcomings remain. Funds for the analysis of these data were made available by the Computer Science Center, University of Maryland.

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago, 1977.

**Not for reproduction, quotation, or any other use without permission of the authors, except for press use after September, 1977.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C.A. Hornung

B.C. Mc Cullough

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CG 012477

STATUS INCONSISTENCY IN MARRIAGE:

CONSEQUENCES FOR LIFE AND MARITAL DISSATISFACTION

The family has traditionally been treated as the basic unit of analysis in social stratification on the assumption that the status attributes of the head of the family determine the family's social standing and are thereby generalizable to other members. The expanding role of women in the mainstream of the workforce and the increase in the number of working wives seriously weakens this assumption (Acker, 1973; Safilios-Rothschild, 1975). As a consequence of women's increasing participation in virtually every stratum of the occupation hierarchy (Featherman and Hauser, 1976), status attributes of the husband are no longer the only or necessarily the primary determinants of the family's social position. More importantly, no longer is the married woman's status identity and social position a relational property[1] derived exclusively from the status achievements of her father and/or her husband. Instead, a woman's status identity is increasingly an "absolute property" determined by her own accomplishments in education, occupation, income (cf. Tickamyer, 1973), and other areas that in conjunction with the achievements of her husband codetermine the social position of the family unit.

The hierarchical arrangements which constitute the social order and define the individual's position within that order permeate every aspect of day-to-day existence and shape even the most intimate social relation-

ships. Status characteristics have been shown to be significant factors in personal happiness as well as in mate selection and subsequent marital adjustment and satisfaction. The available research tends to support the conclusion that there is less marital satisfaction and greater likelihood of separtion and divorce in marriages involving individuals with differing social backgrounds and status attainments (cf. Glenn et al., 1974). Most of this research has focused on relational status characteristics of women such as their father's occupation as compared to either the social origin or current status characteristics of their husband (cf. Pearlin, 1975). The research reported here focuses on the impact of education and occupation status, inconsistency between the statuses currently occupied by the individual, and inconsistencies between husbands' and wives' current statuses on the individual's satisfaction with life in general and with his or her marriage in particular.

Status Inconsistency and Psychological Impairment:

The basic proposition of status consistency theory is that combinations of status characteristics that are defined as inconsistent are psychologically stressful and that this "socially induced stress" (Martin, 1965:65) leads to some form of stress reducing or adaptive behavior. Previous research has assumed that different status dimensions are of equal importance with respect to the expectations individuals have of others, others have of them, and they have of themselves (Jackson, 1962). The definition and measurement of status inconsistency that has prevailed in previous research has not differentiated statuses according to their centrality in controlling expectations of behavior.

However, in his classic article on "Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status" Hughes (1945) distinguished between a "specific" status characteristic and "auxiliary" status characteristics that come to be expected of occupants of a specific status. A specific status thus gives rise to a set of expectations about auxiliary status characteristics of the individual. These status expectation are asymmetric and involve anticipatory and normative components. Status expectations are anticipatory in that if it is believed that an individual possesses specific status characteristic "i" (call it $S^{(i)}$), then it is anticipated that he or she will also possess characteristics "j" and "k" in auxiliary status dimensions A_1 and A_2 respectively (call them $A_1^{(j)}$ and $A_2^{(k)}$). Status expectations are normative in that people come to believe that individuals possessing $S^{(i)}$ should also possess status characteristics $A_1^{(j)}$ and $A_2^{(k)}$. Status expectations are asymmetric in that positions in A_1 and A_2 and expected on the basis of $S^{(i)}$ but $S^{(i)}$ is not necessarily expected on the basis of $A_1^{(j)}$ and/or $A_2^{(k)}$ (Berger et al., 1972; Cook, 1975; Hornung, 1977). This was illustrated by Hughes when he noted that aerodynamic engineers (a specific status) are expected to be male (an auxiliary status) and that physicians are expected to be white but males and whites are not necessarily expected to be aerodynamic engineers or physicians.

Given this formulation, there are several different forms of status inconsistency that are possible within a group context such as a marital dyad. These different forms are displayed in Figure 1 in which S_pA_p and S_oA_o denote inconsistency between specific status S and auxiliary status

A for Person (p) and Other (o). These inconsistencies, like the statuses themselves, are absolute properties[2] of Person and Other.

FIGURE 1 about here

The consequences of this form of status inconsistency for the pscyhological well-being of the individual has received considerable attention since Lenski's pioneer work over two decades ago (1954; 1956). Although the results of this research are confusing and often contradictory (compare, for example: Lenski, 1954; Kelly and Chambliss, 1966; Segal, 1969), the work of Bauman (1968), Hyman (1967), and Hornung (1972; 1977) has shown this type of status inconsistency to be related to dissatisfaction with everyday social interaction and dissatisfaction with current status.

The second form of inconsistency occurring in a group is inconsistency between statuses occupied by different members of the group. S_pS_o and A_pA_o in Figure 1 denote inconsistencies occurring between Person and Other in the same status hierarchy while S_pA_o and S_oA_p are inconsistencies between positions in different hierarchies. These two inter-individual inconsistencies are relational properties of Person and Other respectively. This implies that the status characteristics of an individual give rise to expectations about the status characteristics of other individuals with whom they associate. In the case of the marital dyad this means that the husband's status characteristics give rise to expectations about the status attainments and background characteristics of his wife and that certain combinations come to be defined as consistent with the husband's status. The opposite also holds in that

expectations of the husband's status characteristics arise out of and are based on the status characteristics possessed by the wife. These relational inconsistencies have been shown to be related to the functioning of the group (Adams, 1953; Meeker and Hornung, 1976) and, in the case of the marital dyad, have been claimed to be related to marital discord and dissolution (Weiser and Magnani, 1976).

Each form of status inconsistency described above does not necessarily have the same consequence for the psychological well-being of individuals or for the functioning of the group. Instead, different forms of inconsistency can be expected to affect the individual and his or her relationships with others in different ways. Different forms of status inconsistency ought therefore to be associated with different manifestations of psychological impairment and stress.

An absolute inconsistency is directly experienced by the individual in all social relationships independent of membership in a particular group and the status characteristics of others. Because of the pervasive nature of this form of inconsistency, the stresses involved can be expected to be manifested in a generalized psychological malaise such as, for example, chronic depression and anxiety, high levels of psychosomatic symptoms (Jackson, 1962; Jackson and Burke, 1965), dissatisfaction with everyday social interaction (Bauman, 1968), and dissatisfaction with life in general. This form of inconsistency can be expected to adversely affect the functioning of the group or marriage to the extent that the inconsistency impedes either the individual who directly experiences it or other members who indirectly experience it, from adquately

performing social roles that are functionally important for the stability and persistence of the group. In the case of the marital dyad, important roles include those socio-emotional activities that mediate the imapct of the stresses engendered by the larger social order by aiding the individual in coping with these stresses and providing satisfactions with membership and participation in the group.

Inconsistency of the relational type occurs between members of the group such as between husbands and wives and is a function of membership in a group and the status characteristics of other members. Because this form of inconsistency is directly linked to group membership, the stresses engendered by the inconsistency can be expected to have their most immediate affect on the functioning of the group and to be manifested in the form of individuals being dissatisfied with membership and having a propensity to withdraw from participation. In terms of the marital dyad, inconsistencies occurring between the status of the husband and that of the wife can be expected to be associated with marital dissatisfaction and an increased likelihood of marital dissolution. Relational inconsistencies should lead to a generalized psychological malaise of individuals to the extent that group membership is an important part of their self identity and to the extent that withdrawal from the group is impossible or restricted by strongly endorsed social values or situational constraints.

It is likely that the stressful consequences of all forms of status inconsistency are conditioned by a number of factors which may either exacerbate the stress and augment the difficulties experienced by the

individual, or mollify the stress and diminish the psychological impairment. Strongly held social values are crucial in this respect. In particular, the consequences of status inconsistency for the psychological well-being of the individual and the functioning of groups can be expected to be most pronounced among individuals who are highly concerned with status achievement since these individuals are likely to be the most conscious of any discrepancy or inconsistency between the statuses they currently occupy (Segal et al. 1970; Stehr, 1968). Similarly, the consequences of status inconsistency for life and marital dissatisfaction can be expected to differ for men and women because of different socialization experiences and different sources of satisfactions and dissatisfactions with life and marriage.

Data and Method:

The 1973 and 1974 General Social Surveys were combined in order to obtain a sufficient number of cases to place some confidence in the results. Only those individuals who were currently employed and married to an employed spouse were selected. This limitation permits the comparison of husbands and wives on more than one status dimension without utilizing social origin characteristics of either individual in place of current status. The sampling restrictions yielded 301 cases from the 1973 data set and 316 from the interviews conducted in 1974. Of the 617 cases selected for analysis, 277 of the respondents were men and 340 were women.

Measures of inconsistency between the education and occupation status of the respondent and his or her spouse as well as inconsistencies

between husbands' and wives' education and occupation were calculated following a measurement procedure suggested by Hodge (1970) and modified by Hornung (1972). Male and female respondents were treated separately for purposes of measuring status inconsistency because, while they compete in the same status hierarchies (Treiman and Terrel, 1976), the relationships between the principal dimensions of social stratification differ for males and females. For example, the occupational pay-offs for women who successfully compete in the educational hierarchy have traditionally been less than the pay-offs received by men with an equal level of education. Although these status dynamics may be changing, it remains the case that a particular combination of education and occupation occupied by a man may be defined as consistent while the same combination may be defined as inconsistent for a female occupant.

To measure the degree of inconsistency between the respondent's education and occupation and the inconsistency of the spouse in these status hierarchies the occupational prestige scale was collapsed into seven categories and the mean and standard deviation of years of education were computed for men and women in each category. These means and standard deviations are given in Table 1. The differences between the

Table 1 About Here

educational attainment of men and women by occupation are interesting to note. In lower prestige occupations women in this sample have higher levels of education than men but in the three highest categories of prestige women have less education than similarly employed men. Although several arguments could be made to account for the inequalities suggested

by these figures, they need not receive attention here except to note that the small differences in means coupled with the differences in standard deviations confirm that even though men and women compete in the same status hierarchies, the inter-relationships between the hierarchies differ and require that measures of status inconsistency be calculated separately for men and women.

Accordingly, each individual's degree of inconsistency, S_pA_p and S_oA_o in Figure 1, is defined as the degree to which their education differs in standard deviation units from the mean education of same sex individuals in an occupation with similar prestige rank. To illustrate this measurement procedure, a male respondent as well as the husband of a female respondent who has attained 12 years of education and an occupation ranked in the 50 to 59 category of prestige has education-occupation inconsistency score equal to: (12 - 13.9)/2.8 while a female respondent as well as the wife of a male respondent with the same status combination has an education-occupation inconsistency score of (12 - 12.8)/2.2.

The measure of an individual's own education-occupation inconsistency is thus conditional on occupation and sex and rests on the assumption that an individual is expected to have attained a certain level of education <u>given</u> their occupation and that the expected level of education is contingent on the sex of the individual. It is also assumed that an individual's occupation is an important element of their self-concept (Mulford and Salisbury, 1964) and that others in the same or similar occupation function as a reference group or reference structure (Berger et al., 1972; Zelditch et al., 1966) in terms of which an

individual comes to define a certain level of education as equitable for their occupation and higher or lower levels as inequitable and inconsistent.

The measure of status inconsistency between a respondent's education and the education of his or her spouse was calculated using the means and standard deviations given in Table 2. These values indicate

Table 2 About Here

that wives of men who have attained less than high school graduation have, on the average, about one more year of formal education than do the husbands of women with less than a high school education. In contrast, when women have at least some college, their husbands generally have about one more year of education than do the wives of men with some college or more. This suggests that the expected or status consistent education of wives given the educational attainment of their husbands are not symmetrical to the expected or status consistent years of education of husbands given the educational attainment of wives. In terms of status inconsistency between husbands' and wives' education this means that a man with some high school training is expected to be married to a woman with approximately 11.2 years of education while a woman who has some high school is expected to be married to a man with only about 9.8 years of formal schooling. The wife in the first part of the example is education inconsistent with her husband to the degree that she has more or less education than 11.2 years while the husband in the second part of the example is education inconsistent with his wife to the degree that his educational attainment differs from 9.8 years. This asymmetry of

expected statuses is partly a function of the differences in the distribution of male and female educational attainment. Men with little education tend to be married to women with more formal education partly because there is a shortage of women at the lowest levels of educational attainment. Similarly, men with high levels of education are often married to less educated women because there is a shortage of supply of mates at the very highest levels of educational attainment.

The values for computing inconsistency between husbands' and wives' occupation status are given in Table 3. These values also reveal an

Table 3 About Here

asymmetry of expected statuses in that men engaged in occupations with prestige ratings less than forty-nine are typically married to women whose occupations carry less prestige than do the occupations of husbands of women employed in jobs with prestige ratings below forty-nine. However, both men and women in higher prestige occupations tend to be married to spouses' with occupations rated about ten to fifteen points lower in prestige. Again the differences in expected statuses are produced at least in part by the different numbers of men and women at various points in the occupational prestige hierarchy and by the floor and ceiling effects of the prestige rating scale.

The two remaining forms of inconsistency that can occur between husbands' and wives' statuses are those between different status dimen-

Table 4 About Here

sions. The values necessary for calculating the degree of inconsistency between respondent's occupation and spouse's education are given in

Table 4. The fifth Table presents the values necessary for calculating

Table 5 About Here

degree of inconsistency between respondent's education and his or her spouse's occupation.

It is apparent in Table 4 that men in low prestige occupations are generally married to women with less education than that attained by husbands of similarly employed women. It is also apparent that women in high prestige occupations tend to be married to men with appreciably less formal education than that attained by the wives of men in high prestige jobs. In other words, men with prestigious jobs generally have highly educated wives (i.e., post BA) whereas women in high prestige jobs have husbands who, on the average, have not completed a four year college degree. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper it is interesting to consider the functional importance of a spouse's educational attainment for the individual's own occupational career. These data on employed couples suggest that the high educational attainment of women married to men in high prestige occupations complement and perhaps facilitate their husbands current and future occupational attainments. To the extent that this is true, then it is also likely that the occupational careers of women in high prestige jobs are not equally complemented by their husband's lesser achievements in education.

Previous research into the consequences of status inconsistency, particularly within marriage, have defined inconsistency as <u>simple rank inequality</u> rather than <u>conditional rank inequality</u>. Previous measures of status inconsistency have thus ignored the way in which inequalities

are structured in the social order and the extent to which these inequalities are expressed in expected status relationships. As a result, previous inconsistency research has "built" measurement error and invalidity into the status inconsistency variable which generally results in the underestimation of the effects of the status inconcistency variable (Hope, 1975; Hornung, 1972). The conditional measure of inconsistency presented here is based on the assumption that compatible role definitions, normative expectations of conduct and, in the vocabulary of exchange theory, distributrion laws defining social equity develop around typical combinations of statuses.

Each of the six forms of status inconcistency are computed as deviations in standard deviation units from the mean or expected status. The algebraic sign of the inconsistency score indicates the direction of the inconsistency while the numeric value indicates the degree of inconsistency. Although this measure is useful in that it captures both the magnitude and direction of inconsistency, it creates certain problems for isolating the effects of inconsistency. In particular, psychological impairment or stress, as well as most other attitudinal and behavioral consequences of inconsistency, is predicted to be a function of degree of inconsistency independent of direction. In other words, the slope of the least squares line is predicted to change sign when degree of inconsistency equals zero. Therefore, and in order to adequately test for the effects of inconsistency, the inconsistency variables are measured as unsigned values and dummy variables are included in the equation to recapture information about direction of inconsistency. The

resulting equation is written as:

$$\text{(EQ 1)} \quad Y = \beta_1 E_R + \beta_2 O_R + \beta_3 E_S + \beta_4 O_S + \beta_5 |E_R, O_R| + \beta_6 |E_S, O_S| +$$
$$\beta_7 |E_R, E_S| + \beta_8 |O_R, O_S| + \beta_9 |E_R, O_S| + \beta_{10} |E_S, O_R| +$$
$$c_1 \Delta_1 + c_2 \Delta_2 + c_3 \Delta_3 + c_4 \Delta_4 + c_5 \Delta_5 + c_6 \Delta_6$$

where:

E_R = respondent's years of education

O_R = respondent's occupational prestige

E_S = spouse's years of education

O_S = spouse's occupational prestige

$|E_R, O_R|$ = respondent's degree of inconsistency between education and occupation.

$|E_S, O_S|$ = spouse's degree of inconsistency between education and occupation.

$|E_R, E_S|$ = degree of inconsistency between respondent's and spouse's education.

$|O_R, O_S|$ = degree of inconsistency between respondent's and spouse's occupation.

$|E_R, O_S|$ = degree of inconsistency between respondent's education and spouse's occupation

$|E_S, O_R|$ = degree of inconsistency between respondent's occupation and spouse's education.

$\Delta_1 = 1$ if $(E_R, O_R) > 0$; zero otherwise

$\Delta_2 = 1$ if $(E_S, O_S) > 0$; zero otherwise

$\Delta_3 = 1$ if $(E_R, E_S) > 0$; zero otherwise

$\Delta_4 = 1$ if $(O_R, O_S) > 0$; zero otherwise

$\Delta_5 = 1$ if $(E_R, O_S) > 0$; zero otherwise

$\Delta_6 = 1$ if $(E_S, O_R) > 0$; zero otherwise

The use of dummy variables to denote the direction of inconsistency permits a refinement of the hypothesized consequences of inconsistency and a more comprehensive test of the theory. The coefficients for the dummy variables (c_i) measure the increment or decrement to the slope of Y regressed on inconsistency when the algebraic value of the inconsistency variable is positive while the β_i denote the slope when the algebraic sign of inconsistnecy is negative.

It is expected that the effects of inconsistency will be greatest when education exceeds the level that is consistent with occupation and that less stress will occur when the individual's years of education are less than the expected level. The coefficients c_1 and c_2 are therefore predicted to be negative indicating lower stress levels than that associated with (E_R,O_R) and (E_S,O_S) when they are negative. The rationale for this prediction is conveniently stated in the vocabulary of equity theory in which years of education are an "investment" and occupational prestige is a "reward." When investments are high relative to the level of rewards, the individual is subjected to "inequity-disadvantage" or deprivation whereas when investments are low relative to rewards the individual is subjected to the less stressful condition of "inequity-advantage" (Adams, 1965; Zelditch and Anderson, 1966; Scanzoni, 1972: Cook, 1975).

Refinements can also be made in predicting the effects of inconsistencies between the statuses of the respondent and those of their spouse. enerally, the status attaniments of husbands are expected to exceed ıose of wives, at least in terms of the traditional male role in

marriage. For this reason, it is expected that males married to women with educational and/or occupational statuses that are high relative to the attainments expected on the basis of their own education and/or occupation will suffer greater stress than men with wives who are status consistent or inconsistent with them due to lower levels of education or occupation than expected. In terms of the coefficients in equation 1, this means c_3, c_4, c_5 and c_6 are predicted to be positive when analyzing male respondents. However, it is also possible that, traditional sex roles aside, men with wives who are lower in education and/or occupation than expected experience this inconsistency as stressful if they are concerned about upward social mobility and perceive their wives' relatively low status as a barrier to their own status attainment. This leads to a prediction that coefficients c_3, c_4, c_5 and c_6 will be negative among male respondents who are highly concerned with upward social mobility.

Traditional sex roles as well as achievement orientation suggest that in the case of female respondents, having a husband relatively low in education or occupation is more stressful than having a husband with consistent or higher than expected status. In other words, among female respondents, c_3, c_4, c_5 and c_6 are predicted to be positive and especially large among those women who are highly concerned with status advancement.

The measures of stress, or more precisely dissatisfaction with life in general and dissatisfaction with marriage, were constructed from a factor analysis of eight dichotomized items common to the 1973 and 1974

data sets. The loadings of the items after rotation are given in Table 6. An examination of the factor structure in each of the data sets revealed that the same items loaded on the same factors with only minor differences in the magnitude of the weights. Although the anlaysis of the combined samples does not yield two factors that are judged to be reliable according to the conventional eigenvalue 1.00 criterion, the second factor with an eigenvalue of .98 was extracted because of its substantive interest. Both factor scales were computed by complete estimation procedures and adjusted to have the same means and standard deviations.

TABLE 6 About Here

The regression equation contains four parameters for the main effects and twelve parameters for degree and direction of inconsistency. This is an unacceptably low ratio of number of cases to number of unknowns. For this reason two solutions were obtained. The first or full solution estimated the coefficients for all variables in equation 1. The second or restricted solution entered variables in stepwise mode if their partial F ratio was statistically signficant at the .05 level. Both of these solutions were obtained for an equation which ignored the education and occupation status of respondent and spouse. The analysis was conducted controlling for sex and achievement orientation which was measured as a dichotomy with individuals who rated "chances for advancement" as the most or second most important characteristic of a job defined as high in achievement orientation.

Neither the full nor the restricted solution will necessarily yield

stable estimates of the regression coefficients if there is a high degree of multicollinearity between the measures of status inconsistency (Blalock, 1963). However, the measurement procedure utilized here does not yield highly inter-correlated inconsistency variables. The average correlation between the inconsistency variables ranges from .08 among females low in achievement orientation to .13 among males low in achievement orientation. These low average correlations between the status inconsistency variables indicate that multicollinearity is not an important source of instability of the regression coefficients.

Results:

Table 7 gives the means and standard deviations for respondent's and spouse's education and occupation status controlling for sex and

Table 7 About Here

achievement orientation of the respondent. These values indicate that there are no appreciable differences in education or occupation status of respondents or spouses across categories of the control variables. Accordingly, the results of the regression analysis are not attributable to the effects of the control variables.

TABLE 8 About Here

The results of the restricted solutions for equation 1 which contains terms for the main effects of respondent's and spouse's education and occupation as well as the equation ignoring the main effects are presented in Table 8. Compared with the full model, restricting the variables in the equation to those that attained statistical signifi-

cance does not sacrifice substantial explanatory power but does reduce the number of parameters to be estimated to four or less. This is an acceptable ratio of cases to variables of at least thirty to one in each condition of the sex and achievement orientation control variables.

There are two criteria for assessing the utility of status inconsistency. The first is the proportion of variation explained in each outcome variable with and without the main effects of status and the differences in explanatory power across categories of sex and achievement orientation. The second critieria is the magnitude and direction of the effects of the different forms of status inconsistency on each outcome variable and the differences in these effects across categories of the controls.

With few exceptions (cf. Hornung, 1977), status inconsistency has not been found to be a potent variable for explaining variation in any of the wide range of attitudes and behaviors examined in previous research. This has prompted some to argue that the concept is interesting but scientifically useless (Olsen and Tully, 1972). However, in this anlaysis status inconsistency is a powerful predictor of both life dissatisfaction and marital dissatisfaction net of the effects of the respondent's and his or her spouse's education and occupation as well as when the main effects are left out of the equation. Only for women reporting a low concern with status achievement is inconsistency found to have no explanatory power. In the remaining conditions, that is women high in concern for achievement and for men regardless of their achievement orientation, status inconcistency adds more explained variation net

of the main effects than is accounted for by respondent's and spouse's education and occupation. In other words, the multiple semi-partials involving the inconsistency variables are larger than the multiple correlations between the measures of dissatisfaction and the status variables. More precisely, net of the main effects, status inconsistency adds more than 8 per cent to the explanation of life dissatisfaction for men low in achievement orientation. In contrast, for these same men their own education and occupation combined with their spouse's education and occupation account for only 2.8 per cent and 1.2 per cent of the variation in life and marital dissatisfaction respectively. Further, status inconsistency adds between 5.1 and 8.3 per cent to the explanation of the two measures of dissatisfaction for high achievement oriented men and women whereas the main effects explain as little as 1.9 percent.

Even imposing the strict requirement that status inconsistency explain variation net of the effects of status, these analyses demonstrate that inconsistency does have explanatory power. Moreover, the effects of inconsistency are found to be conditional on achievement orientation and sex.

One aspect of the results when the main effects are ignored is interesting to note. That is the finding that among achievement oriented men, inconsistency fails to explain variation in life dissatisfaction even though it added more than 5 per cent to the explanatory power of the main effects. This suggests that for men who are concerned with status attainment inconsistency interacts with education and/or occupation status in leading to psychological impairment. Similar interaction

effects between status inconsistency and vertical status are evident in research reported by Goffman (1957), Bauman (1968) and have been demonstrated by Hornung (1977).

When judging the scientific soundness of status inconsistency theory in terms of the statistical significance of the effects we find different status variables and different forms of inconsistency related to life and marital dissatisfaction. In addition, these relationships are found to differ across categories of the control variables. One of the most notable findings is the significance of the wife's occupation for the dissatisfactions experienced by husbands and the lack of importance of the husband's status for either his or his wife's psychological well-being. Life and marital dissatisfaction experienced by men is a function of their wives' occupational attainments but not their own accomplishments. In contrast, the dissatisfactions experienced by achievement oriented women are a function of their own educational and occupational attainments but not their husbands' accomplishements in these areas. Thus, both parties to the marriage experience less dissatisfaction when the wife has attained a high prestige occupation. This finding contradicts the idea that husbands' statuses are central for the psychological well-being of both husband and wife and indicates instead that it is the wife's accomplishments that are most important for the life and marital dissatisfactions experienced by both parties to the marriage.

Results for Low Achievement Oriented Men:

When the main effects are left out of the equation the only terms significantly related to the measures of dissatisfaction for men low in achievement orientation are those denoting inconsistencies between husbands' and wives' educational and occupational status. These two inconsistencies differ in the direction of their effects, however. Life and marital dissatisfaction increase as a function of the degree to which wives' education falls below what is expected on the basis of the husband's education. Conversely, both types of dissatisfaction decrease as wives' occupation status falls below what is expected on the basis of the husbands' occupation.

This finding is of particular interest because it contradicts the main effect of wives' occupation which was found to be inversely related to both stress measures. In other words, as wives' occupational status increases, the husbands' dissatisfaction with life and marriage decreases. However, the consequences of these two types of inconsistency for men low in achievement orientation mean that such men do not derive satisfaction from being married to an educated woman, but instead they are threatened and experience stress when she translates her education into occupational attainments.

Results for High Achievement Oriented Men:

The relationship between status inconsistency and dissatisfaction among men high in achievement orientation is such that marital dissatisfaction increases when their wive's education falls below the level expected on the basis of their own attainments in education. Achievement

oriented men may regard their wives' relatively low education as an obstacle their own careers and thus experience the marriage as a source of stress. These men also find their marriages stressful when they have over-achieved in the occupational dimension. They may regard their spouse and marriage as continual sources of pressure for achievement. However, marital stress decreases among these men when their wives are occupation over-achievers. The finding that the wives' degree of education-occupation inconsistency reduces marital stress suggests that these men regard their wives' inconsistency as an "equitable" or shared condition of stress. In this respect, the wife's statuses are the basis for the hunsband's "local comparison" (Berger et al., 1972).

Results for Low Achievement Oriented Women:

The consequences of status inconsistency are somewhat different for female respondents. For those unconcerned about getting ahead, inconsistency fails to explain any of the variation in either measure of dissatisfaction. Apparently these women derive satisfactions and dissatisfactions along other social dimensions such as, for example, doing a good job in their current occupation without regard to their prospects or aspirations for future upward social mobility.

Results for High Acheivement Oriented Women:

In contrast, for a woman high in achievement orientation, dissatisfaction with life decreases when her husband's occupation is higher than expected for his level of education, when her husband's occupation is higher than expected on the basis of her own accomplishments in the

occupation dimension and when her husband's education is higher than expected given her educational attainment. Similarly, such a woman is less dissatisfied with her marriage when her husband has attained a higher prestige occupation than is consistent for his education. Thus, achievement oriented women report satisfaction with life and marriage when they are married to men with educational and occupational accomplishements that are high relative to their own and this satisfaction is enhanced when their husbands' have attained higher than expected occupational prestige.

Summary and Discussion:

Some of the findings reported here are contrary to the predictions offered earlier. The individual's own status inconsistency does not appear to have its greatest or most immediate impact on life dissatisfaction nor do inconsistencies between husbands and wives statuses always lead to marital dissatisfaction in the manner we had anticipated. Rather, inconsistency between husbands' and wives' education and occupation attainments are most strongly associated with marital satisfaction among women who are high in achievement orientation. Also contrary to expectations is the finding that inconsistency explains a larger proportion of the variation in each outcome variable among men low in concern with getting ahead than among men high in achievment orientation. However, status inconsistency is a potent predictor of life and marital dissatisfaction for men low in achievement orientation and for women who report a high concern for status achievement.

The difference between male and female reactions to status incon-

sistency may be because achievement oriented men regard their own inconsistency as a temporary condition or "cost" to be incurred in the long range process of "getting ahead." Alternatively, status inconsistent men may cope with the stresses of inconsistency and its consequences by distorting the value of status attainment in reporting their extent of concern with advancement. If this is the case, then women apparently do not use this cognitive distortion process as a mechanism for coping with the stresses engendered by status inconsistency (Taylor and Hornung, 1977).

These interpretations and speculations can not be tested systematically with these data. They are, however, important considerations for additional research on the consequences of status inconsistency. What these results clearly demonstrate is the conditional and complex nature of status inconsistency effects and the important role of social values in mediating the consequences of inconsistency for the psychological well-being of individuals and for the functioning of groups. Further, the results show the utility of locating status inconsistency within a group context and measuring inconsistency as conditional rank inequality.

Notes:

1. We use the term "relational property" to denote a characteristic or attribute of the individual that is derived and "computed from information about the substantive relationships between the member described and other members" (Lazarsfeld and Menzel, 1965: 31).

2. "Absolute properties" are defined by Lazarsfeld and Menzel (1965: 431) to be "characteristics of members which are obtained without making any use of either information about the characteristics of the collective, or of information about the relationships of the member being described to other members."

References

Acker, Joan. 1973. "Women and Social Stratification: A Case of Intellectual Sexism." American Journal of Sociology 78 (January): 936-945.

Adams, Stuart. 1953. "Status Congruency as a Variable in Small Group Performance." Social Forces 32 (October): 16-22.

Adams, J. Stacy. 1965. "Inequality in Social Exchange." Pp. 267-300 in Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, edited by L. Berkowitz. New York: Academic Press.

Bauman, Karl E. 1968. "Status Inconsistency, Satisfactory Social Interaction and Community Satisfaction in an Area of Rapid Growth." Social Forces 47 (October): 45-52.

Berger, J., M. Zelditch, B. Anderson and B.P. Cohen. 1972. "Structural Aspects of Distributive Justice: a Status-Value Formulation." Pp. 119-146 in Sociological Theories in Progress edited by J. Berger, M. Zelditch and B. Anderson. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Blalock, H.M., Jr. 1963. "Correlated Independent variables: the problem of multicollinearity." Social Forces 42 (March): 233-7.

Cook, Karen S. 1975. "Expectations, Evaluations and Equity." American Sociological Review 40 (June): 372-388.

Featherman, David L. and Robert M. Hauser. 1976. "Sexual Inequalities and Socioeconomic Achievement in the U.S., 1962-1973." American Sociological Review 41 (June): 462-483.

Glenn, Norval D., Adreain A. Ross and J.C. Tully. 1974. "Patterns of Intergenerational Mobility of Females Through Marriage." American Sociological Review 39 (October): 683-699.

Goffman, Irwin W. 1957. "Status Consistency and Preference for Change in Power Distribution." American Sociological Review 22 (June); 275-281.

Hodge, Robert W. 1970. "Social Integration, Psychological Well-Being, and Their Socioeconomic Correlates." Pp. 182-206 in Social Stratification edited by Edward O. Laumann. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Hope, Keith. 1975. "Models of Status Inconsistency and Social Mobility Effects." American Sociological Review 40 (June): 322-43.

Hornung, Carlton A. 1972. "Status Consistency: A Method of Measurement and Empirical Examination." Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Syracuse University.

_____. 1977. "Social Status, Status Inconsistency and Psychological Stress." American Sociological Review forthcoming (August).

Hyman, Martin D. 1967. "The Unpleasant Consequences of Rank Inconsistency: Suggestions for a Reorientation of Theory and Research." Sociological Quarterly 8: 383-396.

Jackson, Elton F. 1962. "Status Consistency and Symptoms of Stress." American Sociological Review 27 (August): 469-480.

Jackson, Elton F. and Peter J. Burke. 1965. "Status and Symptoms of Stress: Additive and Interactive Effects." American Sociological Review 30 (August): 556-564.

Kelly, Dennis and William Chambliss. 1966. "Status Consistency and Political Attitudes." American Sociological Review 31 (June): 375-382.

Lazarsfeld, Paul F. and Herbert Menzel. 1965. "On the Relations between Individual and Collective Properties." Pp. 422-440 in Complex Organizations edited by Amitai Etzioni. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Lenski, Gerhard E. 1954. "Status Crystallization: A Non-Vertical Dimension of Social Status." American Sociological Review 19 (August): 405-415.

_____. 1956. "Social Participation and Status Crystallization." American Sociological Review 21 (August): 458-464.

Martin, Walter T. 1965. "Socially Induced Stress: Some Convering Theories." Pacific Sociological Review 8 (Fall): 63-69.

Meeker, Barbara Foley and Carlton A. Hornung. 1976. "Strategies of Interaction." Social Science Research 5: 153-172.

Mulford Harold A. and Winfield W. Salisbury. 1964. "Self Conceptions in a General Population." Sociological Quarterly (Winter).

Olsen, Marvin E. and Judy Corder Tully. 1972. "Socioeconomic-Ethnic Status Inconsistency and Preference for Political Change." American Sociological Review 37 (October): 560-574.

Pearlin, Leonard I. 1975. "Status Inequality and Stress in Marriage." American Sociological Review 40 (June): 344-357.

Safilios-Rothschild, Constantina. 1975. "Family and Stratification: Some Macro-sociological Observations and Hypotheses." Journal of Marriage and the Family (November): 855-860.

Scanzoni, John. 1972. Sexual Bargaining. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Segal, David R. 1969. "Status Inconsistency: Cross-Pressures and American Political Behavior." American Sociological Review 34 (June): 352-359.

Segal, David R. and Mady Weschler Segal and David Knoke. 1970. "Status Inconsistency and Self-Evaluation." Sociometry 33 (September): 347-357.

Stehr, Nico. 1968. "Status Consistency: The Theoretical Concept and Its Empirical Referent." Pacific Sociological Review 11: 9599.

Taylor, H.F. and C.A. Hornung. 1977. "On a General Model for Cognitive and Social Consistency." Unpublished Manuscript.

Tickamyer, A.R. 1973. "Status Inconsistency of Married Women: Absolute, Relational and Comparative Models." Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Maryland.

Treiman, Donald J.and Kermit Terrell. 1975. "Sex and the Process of Status Attainment: A Comparison of Working Women and Men." American Sociological Review 40 (April): 174-200.

Weiser, David J. and Robert J. Magnani. 1976. "Status Disequilibrium and Marital Happiness." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, New York City.

Zelditch, Morris and Bo Anderson. 1966. "On the Balance of a Set of Ranks." In Sociological Theories in Progess edited by J. Berger, M. Zelditch and B. Anderson. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Zelditch, Morris, J. Berger, and B.P. Cohen. 1966. "Stability of Organizational Status Structures." Pp. 269-294 in Sociological Theories in Progress edited by Berger et al.

FIGURE 1

TYPES OF INCONSISTENCY IN A DYAD

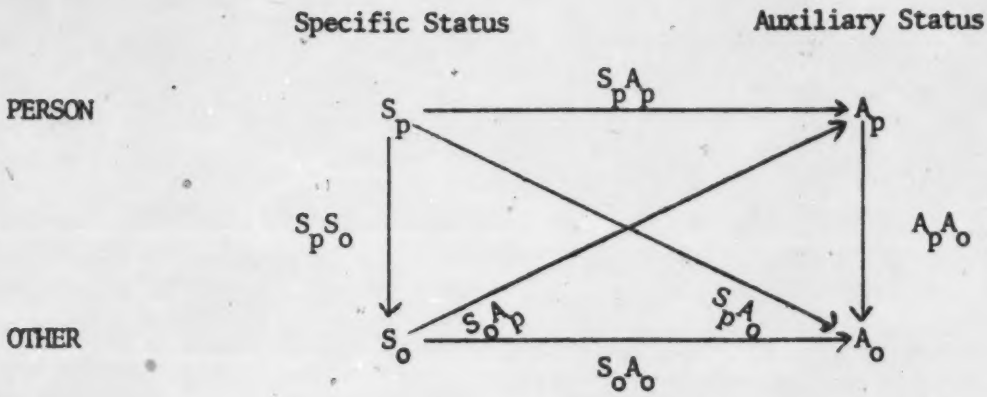

TABLE 1

Expected Educational Attainment by Occupational Prestige by Sex

	Expected Educational Attainment			
	Males		Females	
Occupational Prestige	X	s	X	s
Less than 19	10.6	2.6	11.1	2.1
20 to 29	10.4	2.8	11.0	2.0
30 to 39	11.4	2.8	11.6	2.2
40 to 49	12.3	2.4	12.8	1.7
50 to 59	13.9	2.8	12.8	2.2
60 to 69	16.1	2.3	15.1	1.8
70 and above	17.3	2.8	15.3	2.7

TABLE 2

Expected Educational Attainment of Spouses by Educational Attainment of Respondent

Respondent's Educational Attainment	Expected Educational Attainment of Spouse			
	Husbands		Wives	
	$\bar{X}$	s	$\bar{X}$	s
Eighth Grade or Less	9.3	2.9	10.0	2.4
Some High School	9.8	2.6	11.2	1.6
High School Graduate	12.1	2.4	12.1	1.6
Some College	13.5	3.4	12.6	2.6
College Graduate	15.3	2.9	14.8	2.0
Post College	16.3	2.5	15.4	2.0

TABLE 3

Expected Occupational Prestige of Spouses by Occupational Prestige of Respondent

Respondent's Occupational Prestige	Expected Occupational Prestige of Spouse			
	Husbands		Wives	
	$\bar{X}$	s	$\bar{X}$	s
Less than 19	35.8	13.0	30.3	10.8
20 to 29	36.7	12.9	33.1	10.4
30 to 39	39.3	12.6	38.0	12.6
40 to 49	43.0	13.0	40.7	12.7
50 to 59	44.4	11.3	45.9	12.2
60 to 69	51.2	12.3	51.7	12.7
70 and above	43.3	20.4	56.7	14.0

TABLE 4

Expected Educational Attainment of Spouses by Occupational Prestige of Respondent

Respondent's Occupational Prestige	Expected Educational Attainment of Spouse			
	Husbands		Wives	
	X	s	X	s
Less than 19	10.8	3.2	11.5	2.0
20 to 29	11.1	3.1	11.4	2.3
30 to 39	11.6	3.1	11.9	2.1
40 to 49	12.9	2.8	12.2	2.2
50 to 59	12.1	3.3	13.0	2.4
60 to 69	14.8	2.9	15.3	1.9
70 and above	13.5	3.2	14.7	2.4

TABLE 5

Expected Educational Attainment of Respondent by Sex by Occupational Prestige of Spouse

Spouse's Occupational Prestige	Expected Educational Attainment of Respondent			
	Males		Females	
	X	s	X	s
Less than 19	10.1	2.6	10.9	2.2
20 to 29	11.8	2.2	11.0	3.1
30 to 39	12.0	2.0	11.7	2.7
40 to 49	12.3	2.1	12.8	2.8
50 to 59	13.6	2.2	14.7	3.5
60 to 69	13.7	2.7	15.2	2.7
70 and above	15.2	1.6	15.5	3.9

TABLE 6

ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS

Item	Life Dissatisfaction	Marital Dissatisfaction
1	.514	.163
2	.733	.034
3	.426	.531
4	.578	.308
5	.503	.185
6	.042	.864
7	.236	.761
8	.564	.093
Eigenvalue	2.739	.981

Items:

1. On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do?
2. How much satisfaction do you get from your non-working activities - hobbies and so on?
3. How much satisfaction do you get from your family life?
4. How much satisfaction do you get from your friendships?
5. How much satisfaction do you get from your health and physical condition?
6. Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage? Would you say that your marriage is very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?
7. Taken all together, how would you say things are these days - would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?
8. In general, do you find your life exciting, pretty routine, or dull?

TABLE 7

Education and Occupation Status by Sex and Achievement Orientation of Respondent

		Respondent's Status		Spouse's Status	
		Educ.	Occup.	Educ.	Occup.
Male Respondent; High Achievement Orientation n = 158	$\bar{X}$ =	12.91	42.98	12.72	42.13
	s =	3.14	14.26	2.55	14.73
Male Respondent; Low Achievement Orientation n = 119	$\bar{X}$ =	12.40	41.41	12.30	39.61
	s =	3.55	14.07	2.32	12.41
Female Respondent; High Achievement Orientation n = 159	$\bar{X}$ =	12.38	41.26	12.31	41.56
	s =	2.26	13.14	3.18	13.57
Female Respondent; Low Achievement Orientation n = 181	$\bar{X}$ =	12.59	41.71	12.54	42.75
	s =	2.44	15.14	3.33	13.61